

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, YO

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - JAT SCHEDULED SERVICE TO U.S.

REF : STATE 14220

1. EMBASSY OFFICERS MET WITH JAT GENERAL DIRECTOR RADISAVLJEVIC AND CIVIL AVIATION REPRESENTATIVE SARIC, AND PRESENTED INFOR PARA 3 REFTEL.

2. IN DISCUSSION THAT FOLLOWED REFISAVLJEVIC SAID HE WAS "SHOCKED" AT NEGATIVE US RESPONSE. IN EXPRESSING HIS UNHAPPINESS, HE ENUMERATED THREE BASIC THOUGHTS CONCERNING IMPORTANCE OF JAT'S BEING ABLE TO INITIATE SCHEDULED SERVICE ON APRIL FIRST.

A. HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN DELAY BEYOND APRIL 1ST DATE TO HIS "COMRADES" IN JAT WHO WILL BE ANGRY ABOUT DIRUPTION OF COMPANY'S COMMERCIAL PROGRAM.

B. HE WILL HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN EXPLAINING DELAY TO YUGOSLAV PRESS, WHICH HAS ALREADY PUBLISHED JAT'S SCHEDULE OF SERVICE TO U.S. (UNCLEAR HERE WHETHER HIS IMPLICATION WAS THAT HE HIMSELF OR USG WOULD BE SUBJECT OF PRESS ATTACKES.)

C. JAT HAS ALREADY INVITED THREE FEC VICE PRESIDENTS ON
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APRIL 1ST INAUGURAL FLIGHT AND HE WILL BE EMBARRASSED IN THERE IS NO INAUGURAL ON THAT DATE.

3. RADISAVLJEVIC THEN WENT ON TO STATE THAT JAT MAY RECOMMEND TO GOY CANCELLATION OF PANAM'S OPERATING PERMIT AND INDICATED JAT WILL HAVE TO REVISE AND PERHAPS CANCEL PLANS TO PURCHASE US WIDE-BODIES AIRCRAFT. HE HINTED THAT JAT MAY PURCHASE SOVIET AIRCRAFT IS APRIL 1ST DEADLINE NOT MET. IN GIVE AND TAKE THAT FOLLOWED WE MADE CLEAR THAT USG POSITION DID NOT RPT NOT REJECT POSSIBILITY OF JAT BEGINNING SCHEDULED SERVICE TO US IN 1976, BUT THAT DESIRE TO DO SO ON APRIL 1ST UNREALISTIC, SINCE ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF SERVICE AND GOVT. TO GOVT. NEGOTIATION ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH SERVICE MAY BE CARRIED OUT COULD NOT POSSIBLY BE COMPLETED BY APRIL 1ST. RADISAVLJEVIC RESPONDED BY EMBELLISHING ON THEMES CITED ABOVE.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: RADISAVLJEVIC' HYPERBOLIC (AN IN WAYS SILLY) RESPONSE SURPRISED US SINCE WE CONSIDERED THAT OUR MESSAGE WAS RESPONSIVE TO JAT'S BASIC INTEREST. WE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED SUCH AN OUTBURST ONLY IN EVENT OF COMPLETE TURNDOWN BY USG. PART OF EXPLANATION MAY BE YUGOSLAVS' TRADITIONAL NEGOTIATING TACTICS THAT ASSUME A PLEASANT WORD SPOKEN ABOUT THE SUBJECT UNDER NEGOTIATION FATALLY BETRAYS THEIR POSITION; PART OF IT MAY BE RADISAVLJEVIC'S OWN TOUGH PERSONALITY; AND PART OF IT MAY BE DESIRE TO KEEP UP PRESSURE ON USG TO MEET APRIL 1ST DEADLINE. THREAT TO DENY PANAM'S REEQAL OF OPERATING PERMIT STRIKES US AS NOT A CREDIBLE REACTION TO POSSIBILITY OF SOME DELAY WHILE WORKING OUT INTERIM ARRANGEMENT. ON OTHER HAND, WE BELIEVE GOY MAY WELL WITHDRAW PERMIT OR TAKE SOME OTHER RESTRICTIVE ACTION AGAINST PANAM HERE IF YUGOSLAVIA IS UNABLE (OR BELIEVES IS NOT POSSIBLE) TO REACH SATISFACTORY INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH US IN REASONABLE TIME. COMMENT LINKING DECISION ON WIDE-BODIES AIRCRAFT TO APRIL 1ST DEADLINE ALSO APPEARS A CLEAR BLUFF SINCE EARLIEST POSSIBLE WIDE-BODY USE BY JAT IS SUMMER 1977; AND INDEED SO MANY UNKNOWN EXIST THAT TIME FRAME 1978 OR 1979 UTILIZATION MORE LIKELY.

5. OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT JAT HAS PAINTED ITSELF INTO A CORNER BY PROCEEDING WITH COMMERCIAL PLANS TO INITIATE SCHEDULED SERVICE IN APRIL (INCLUDING ANNOUNCING SCHEDULE OF FLIGHTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO YUGOSLAV PUBLIC) WHILE GOY EFFORTS TO SECURE OPERATING RIGHTS WERE NOT PROCEEDING Apace. IN EFFORT TO SAVE THE SITUATION, SINCE JAT PROBABLY HAS STRUCTURED ITS 1976 COMMERCIAL PROGRAM ON ASSUMPTION OF SCHEDULED SERVICE TO US. JAT HAS ASKED AMBASSADOR'S PERSONAL INTERVENTION IN ORDER TO SECURE SPEEDY USG APPROVAL OF SOME ARRANGEMENT THAT WILL PERMIT SCHEDULED SERVICE BEGINNING APRIL 1ST OPERATING THREE TIME A WEEK IN TOURIST SEASON AND TWICE A WEEK REST OF YEAR. (IN THIS REGARD, CONDITION OF POSSIBLE INTERIM AGREEMENT USED AS EXAMPLE IN FYI PORTION REFTEL MAY BE COMMERCIALY

UNSATISFACTORY TO JAT.)

5. RECOMMENDATION AMBASSADOR WOULD LIKE WASHINGTON AGENCIES TO CONTINUE TO HANDLE JAT AND GOY REQUEST IN PROFESSIONAL LOW-KEY MANNER, NEITHER EXPEDITING NOR HINDERING NORMAL PROCESS. WHILE I TRUST SOME AGREEMENT WILL RESULT IN DUE COURSE, I AM PLEASED TO LEARN (REFTELL THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY TO CONCLUDING INTERIM ARRANGEMENT IN TIME TO PERMIT JAT BEGIN SERVICE ON APRIL ONE. EXPEDITING PROCESS TO MEET APRIL 1ST DEADLINE WOULD ENCOURAGE YUGOSLAVS TO BELIEVE THEY CAN BEHAVE IRRESPONSIBLY IN DEALING WITH USG. THEY HAVE ACTED IN THIS CASE LIKE THE MAN WHO HAS THROWN HIMSELF OFF THE CLIFF AND THEN SHOUTED IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BYSTANDERS TO SAVE HIM. I AM INCLINED TOWISH RADISAVLEVIC HAPPY LANDINGS, BUT WOULD NOT GO OUT OF MY WAY TO CUSHION HIS FALL.
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